

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus for authentication of postage indicia are disclosed. A secret key is read from store and modified in dependence upon postage data to be printed  
5 in a postage indicium. The modified key is then utilised to generate an authentication code dependent upon the postage data to be printed. Authentication of the indicium is effected by reading the authentication code and postage data from the printed indicium and repeating  
10 the process of generating an authentication code. The generated authentication code is compared with the authentication code read from the indicium. A control code based on a value in an accounting register may be included in the indicium. The value may be a value of  
15 postage dispensed in a determined expired period.

20

25

30

35

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176